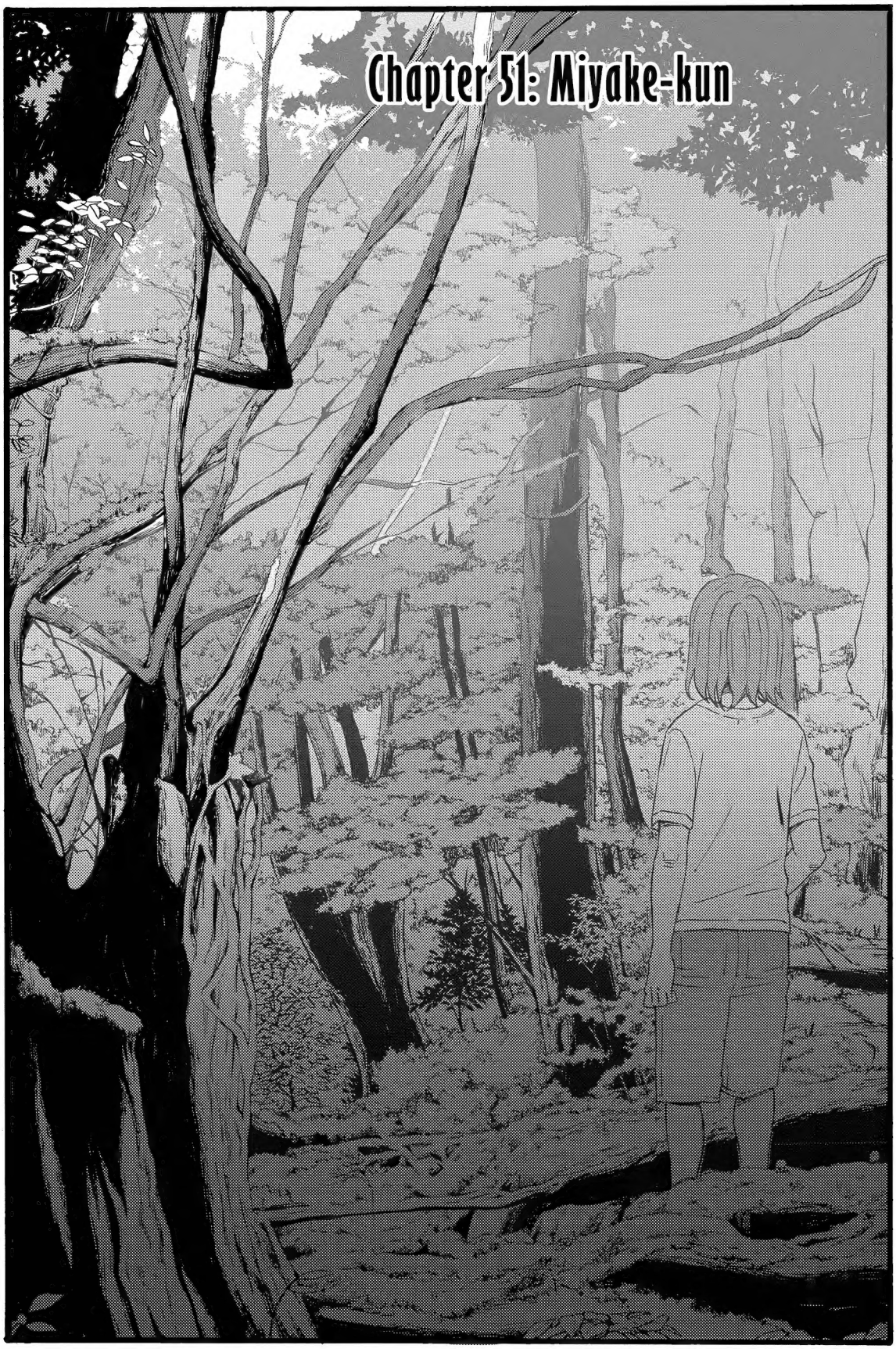
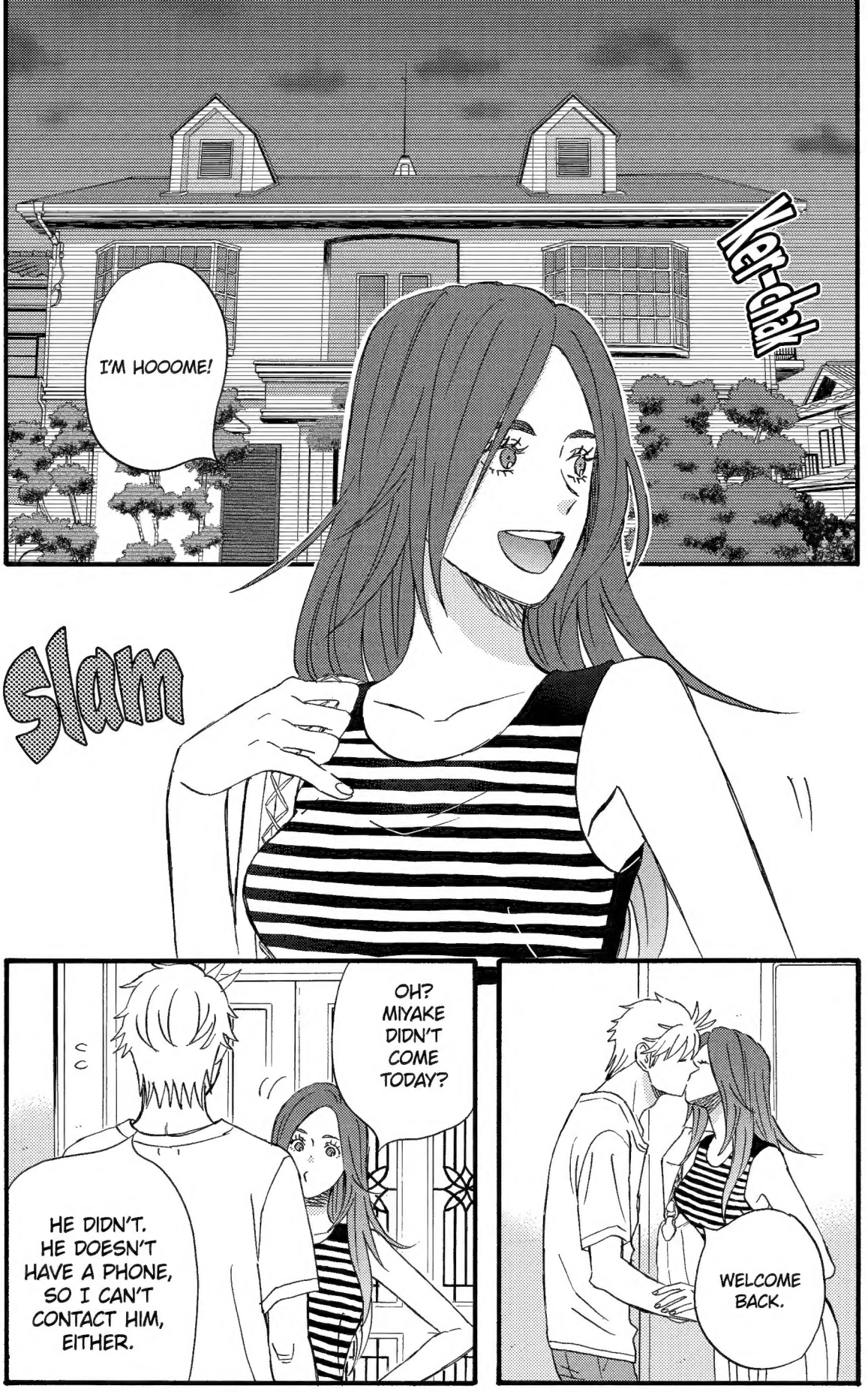
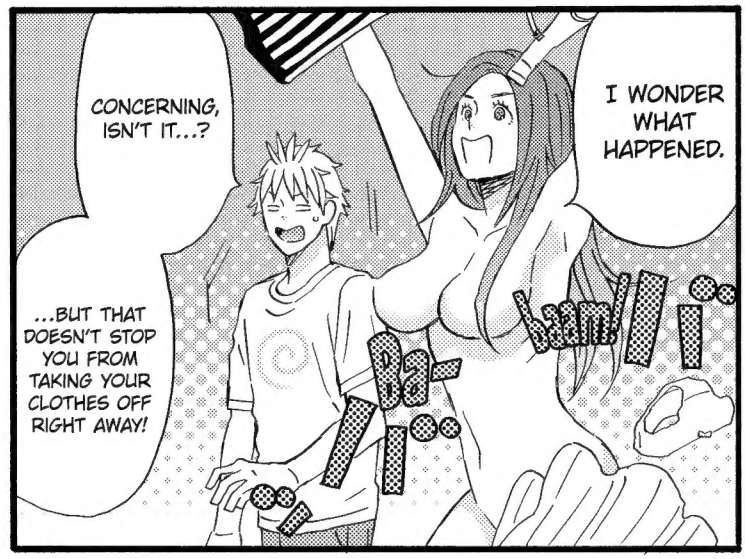
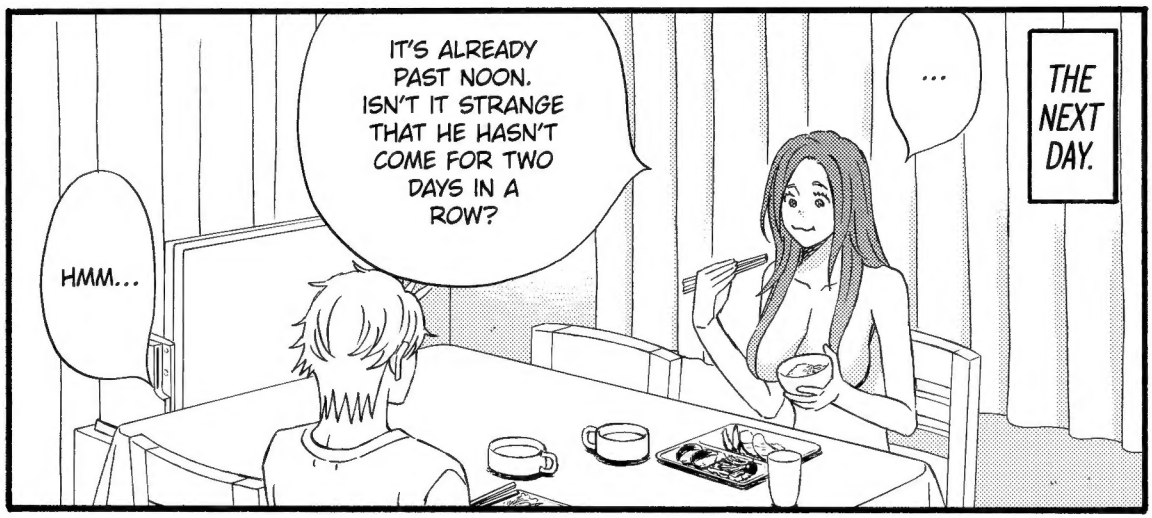


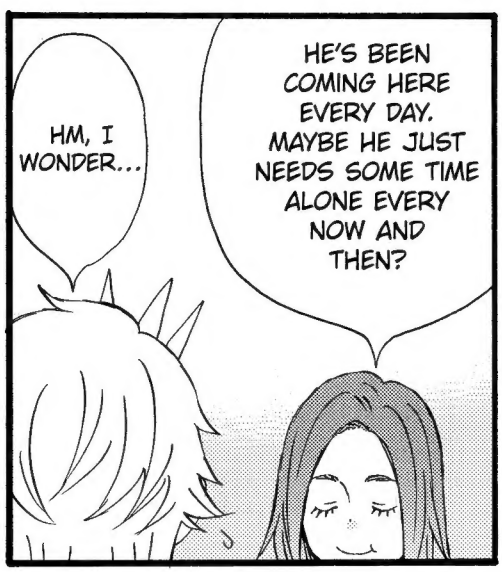
Chapter 51: Miyake-kun

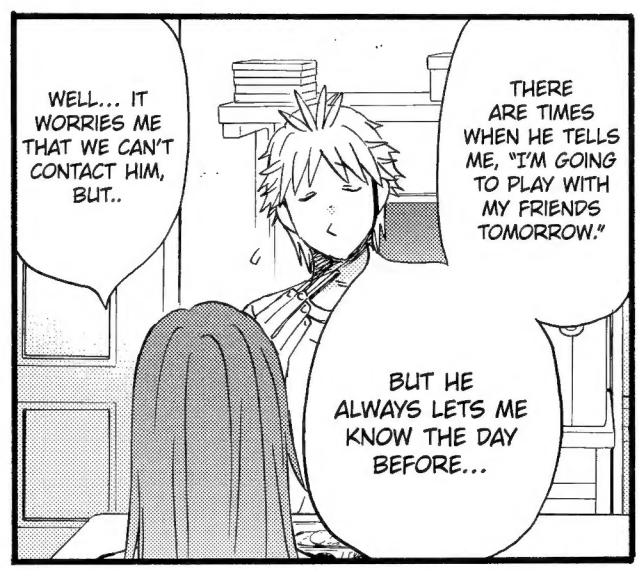

Ka-chak
I'M HOOOME!
Slam
OH? MIYAKE DIDN'T COME TODAY?
HE DIDN'T. HE DOESN'T HAVE A PHONE, SO I CAN'T CONTACT HIM, EITHER.
WELCOME BACK.

I'LL DRESS PROPERLY IF MIYAKE COMES.
GEEZ...

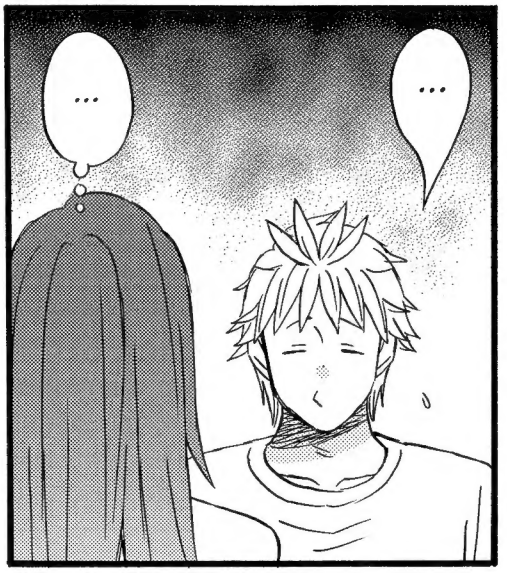

I WONDER WHAT HAPPENED.
CONCERNING, ISN'T IT...?
...BUT THAT DOESN'T STOP YOU FROM TAKING YOUR CLOTHES OFF RIGHT AWAY!


THE NEXT DAY.
...
IT'S ALREADY PAST NOON. ISN'T IT STRANGE THAT HE HASN'T COME FOR TWO DAYS IN A ROW?
HMM...

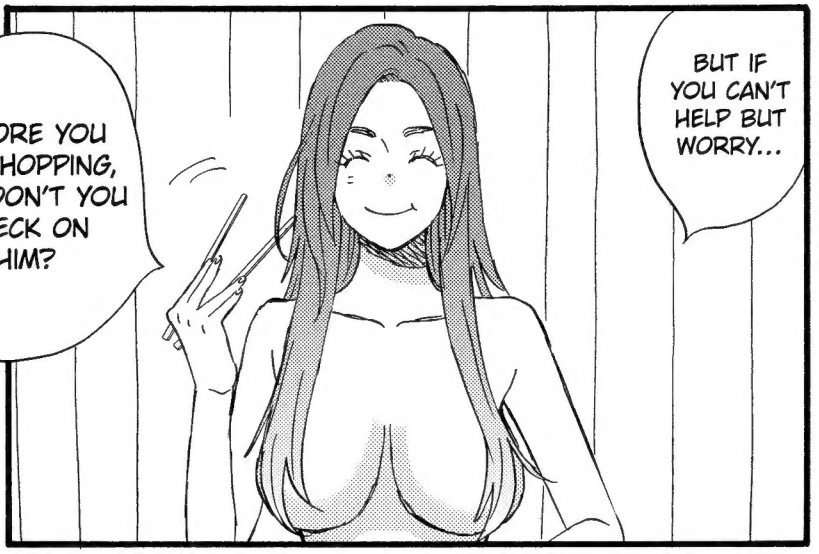

HE'S BEEN COMING HERE EVERY DAY. MAYBE HE JUST NEEDS SOME TIME ALONE EVERY NOW AND THEN?
HM, I WONDER...


THERE ARE TIMES WHEN HE TELLS ME, "I'M GOING TO PLAY WITH MY FRIENDS TOMORROW."
WELL... IT WORRIES ME THAT WE CAN'T CONTACT HIM, BUT..
BUT HE ALWAYS LETS ME KNOW THE DAY BEFORE...

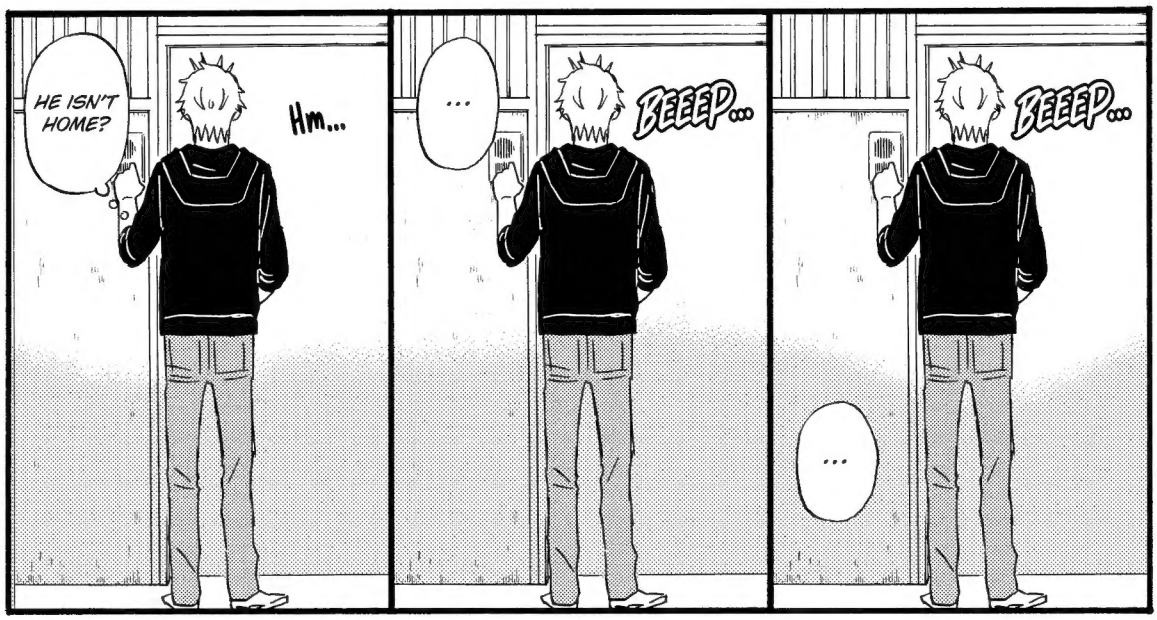
HE'S IN JUNIOR HIGH. I DON'T THINK YOU NEED TO WORRY THAT MUCH.

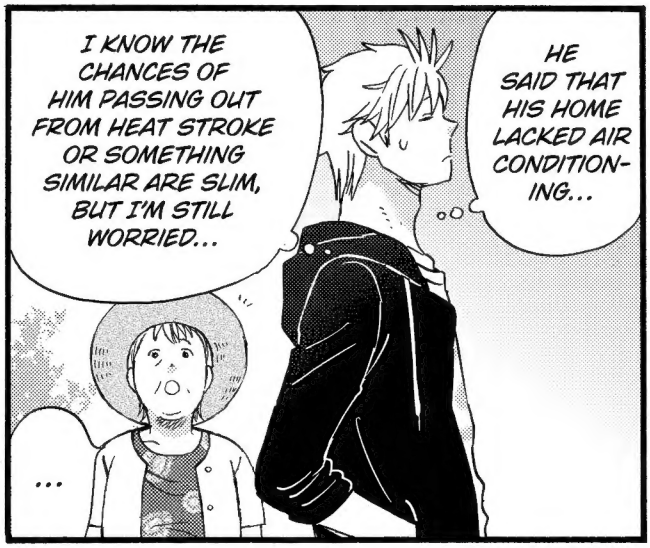

...
...

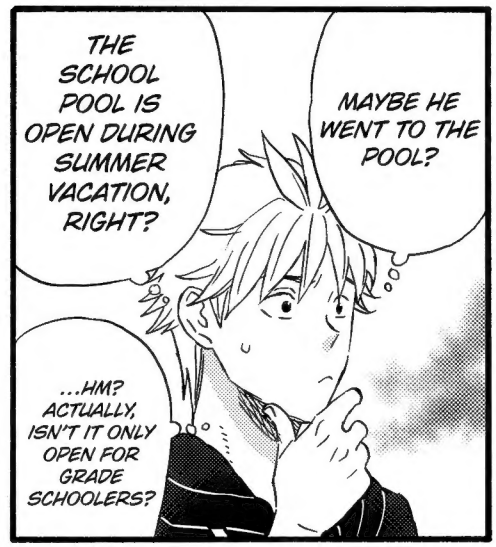
BEFORE YOU GO SHOPPING, WHY DON'T YOU CHECK ON HIM?

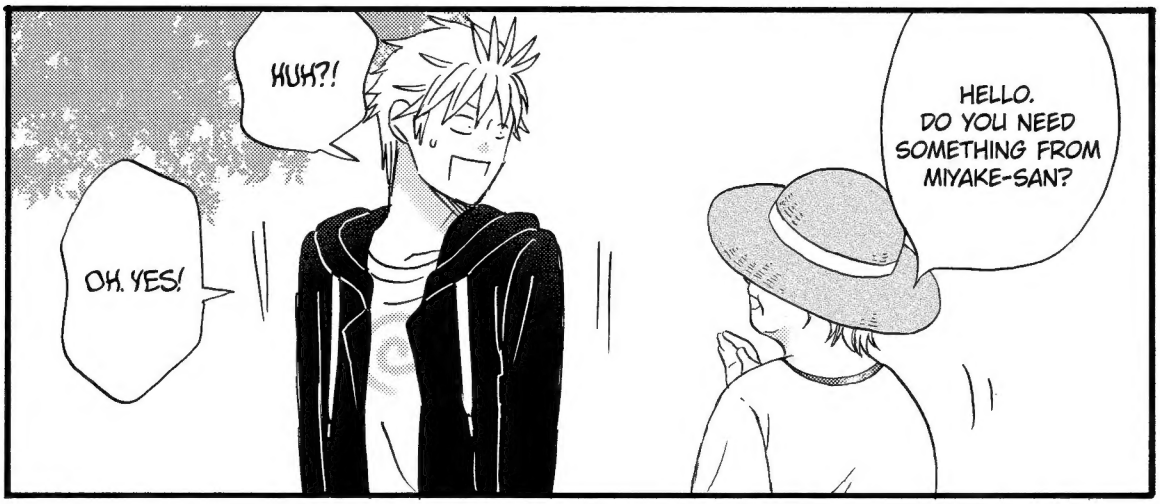

BUT IF YOU CAN'T HELP BUT WORRY...

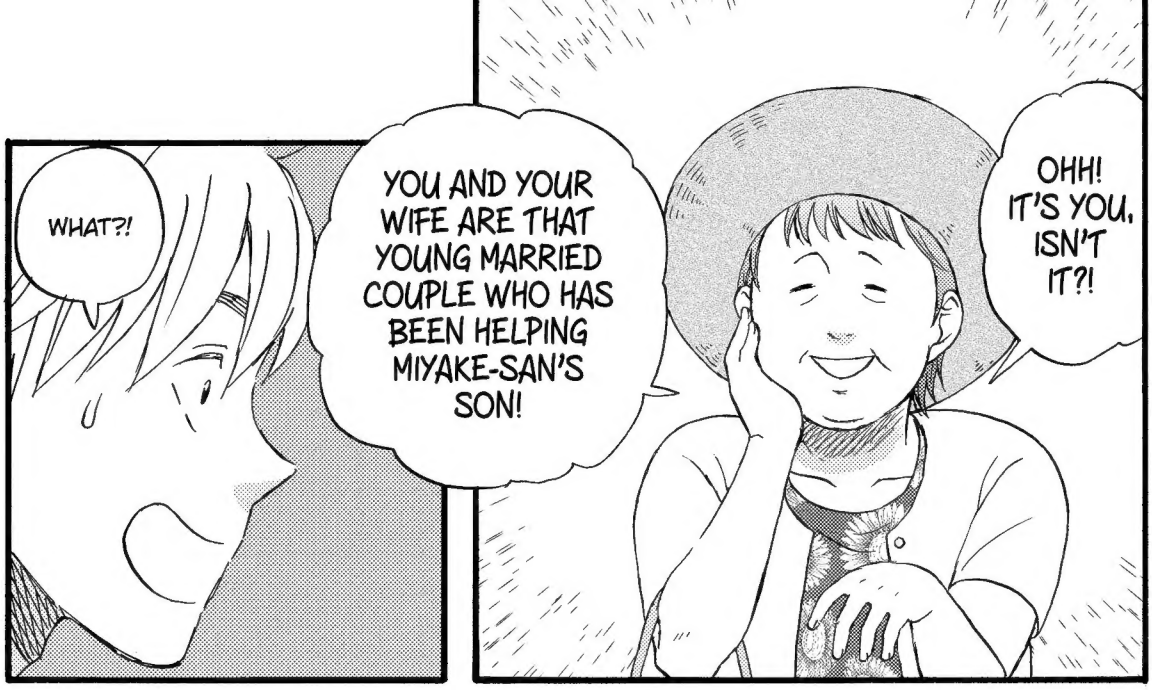
...BUT FIRST, LET'S CHECK ON MIYAKE-KUN.
DENTAL CLINIC
SHOPPING, SHOPPING...
Dash
Thmp
Thmp

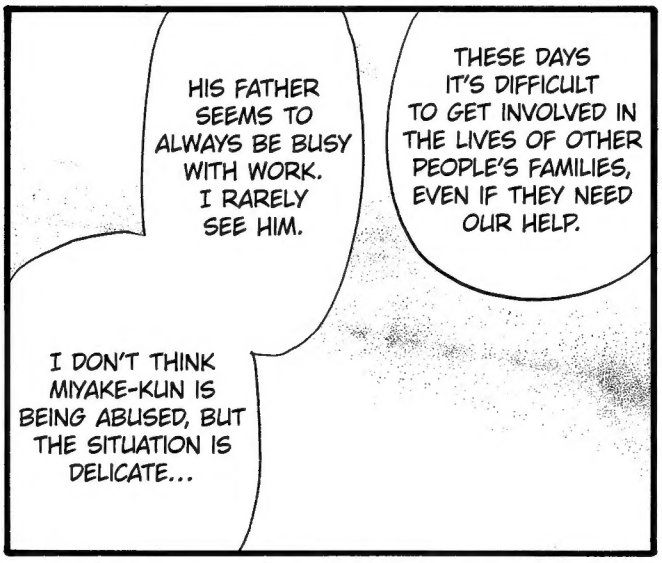

HE ISN'T HOME?
Hm...
...
BEEEP...
BEEEP...
...


I KNOW THE CHANCES OF HIM PASSING OUT FROM HEAT STROKE OR SOMETHING SIMILAR ARE SLIM, BUT I'M STILL WORRIED...
HE SAID THAT HIS HOME LACKED AIR CONDITIONING...
...

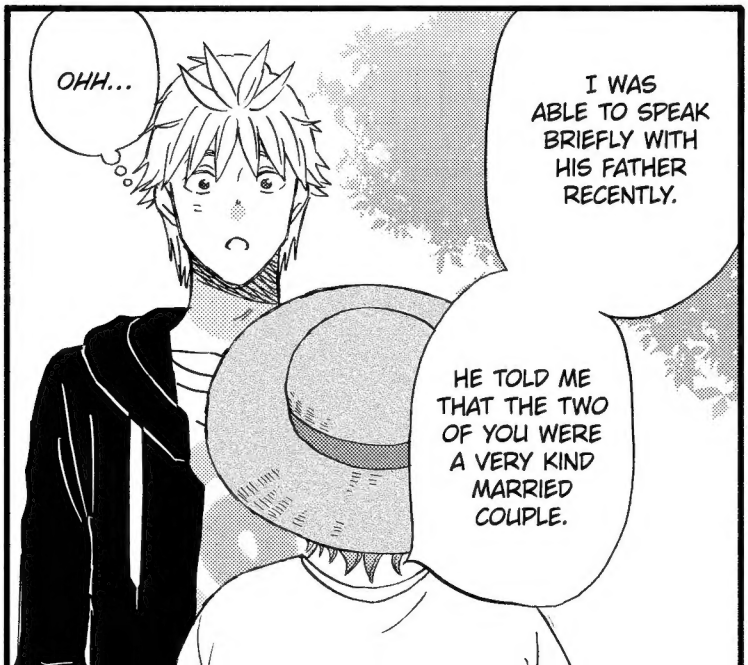

THE SCHOOL POOL IS OPEN DURING SUMMER VACATION, RIGHT?
MAYBE HE WENT TO THE POOL?
...HM? ACTUALLY, ISN'T IT ONLY OPEN FOR GRADE SCHOOLERS?


HUH?!
OH. YES!
HELLO. DO YOU NEED SOMETHING FROM MIYAKE-SAN?


OHH! IT'S YOU, ISN'T IT?!
YOU AND YOUR WIFE ARE THAT YOUNG MARRIED COUPLE WHO HAS BEEN HELPING MIYAKE-SAN'S SON!
WHAT?!


THESE DAYS IT'S DIFFICULT TO GET INVOLVED IN THE LIVES OF OTHER PEOPLE'S FAMILIES, EVEN IF THEY NEED OUR HELP.
HIS FATHER SEEMS TO ALWAYS BE BUSY WITH WORK. I RARELY SEE HIM.
I DON'T THINK MIYAKE-KUN IS BEING ABUSED, BUT THE SITUATION IS DELICATE...

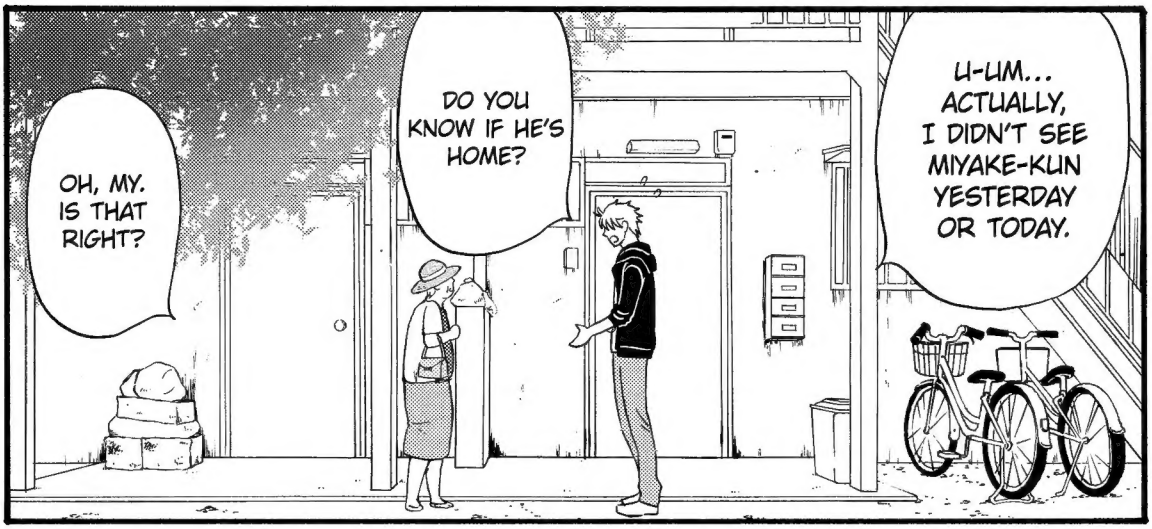
...YES, THAT WOULD BE US.
I'M GLAD. MIYAKE-KUN HAS BECOME A LOT MORE CHEERFUL.
EVERYONE'S BEEN TALKING ABOUT IT.

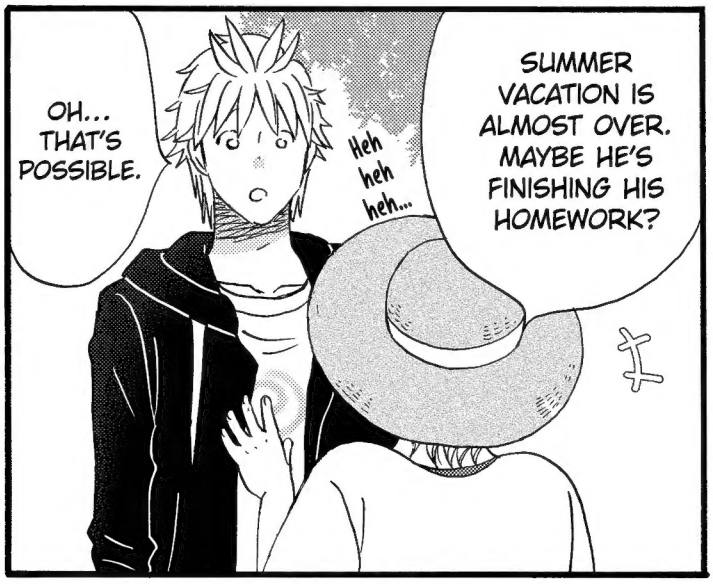

I WAS ABLE TO SPEAK BRIEFLY WITH HIS FATHER RECENTLY.
HE TOLD ME THAT THE TWO OF YOU WERE A VERY KIND MARRIED COUPLE.
OHH...

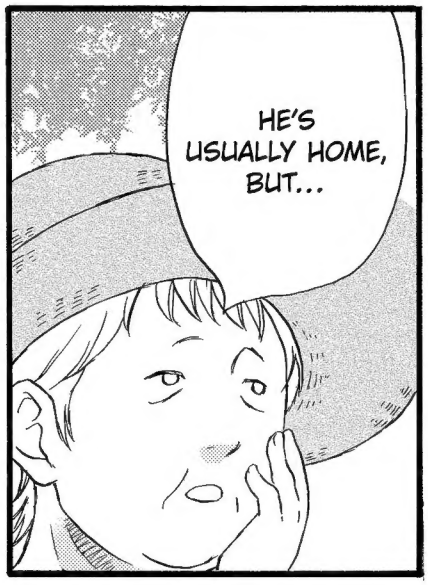
HE ALSO ACTS AS IF EVERYTHING IS FINE, WHICH COMPLICATES MATTERS...
EVERYONE IS QUITE WORRIED...
OH, I UNDER-STAND.

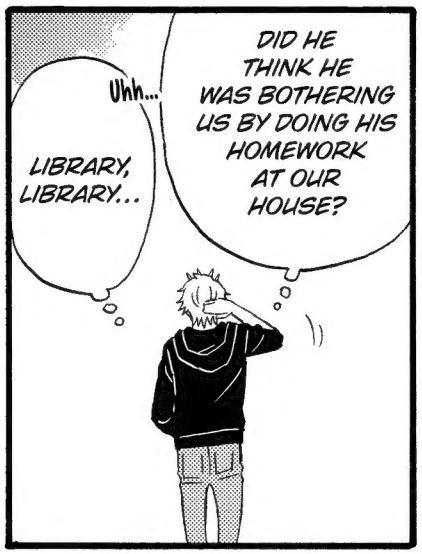
...
"I FEEL TERRIBLY SORRY FOR MY SON, WHO HAS TO LIVE WITH SUCH A GOOD-FOR-NOTHING FATHER."
...HE TOLD ME THAT TOO.

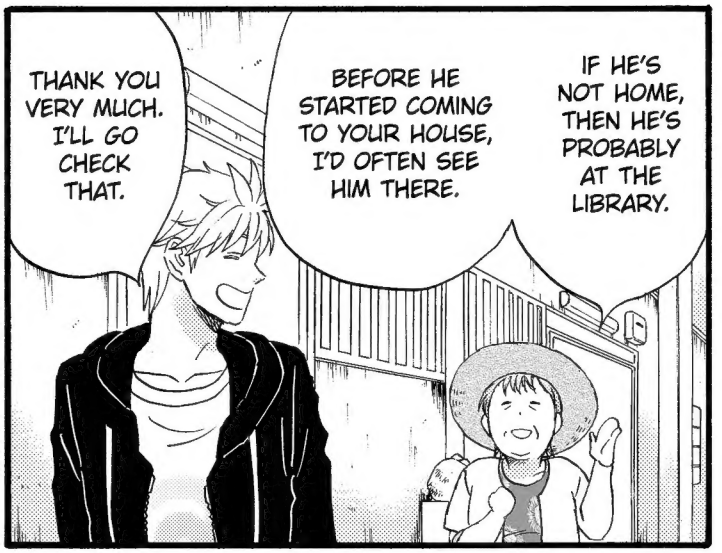
MIYAKE-KUN HAS ALSO BEEN HELPING US A FAIR BIT.
IT'S TRUE THAT WE'VE BEEN HELPING THEM, BUT...

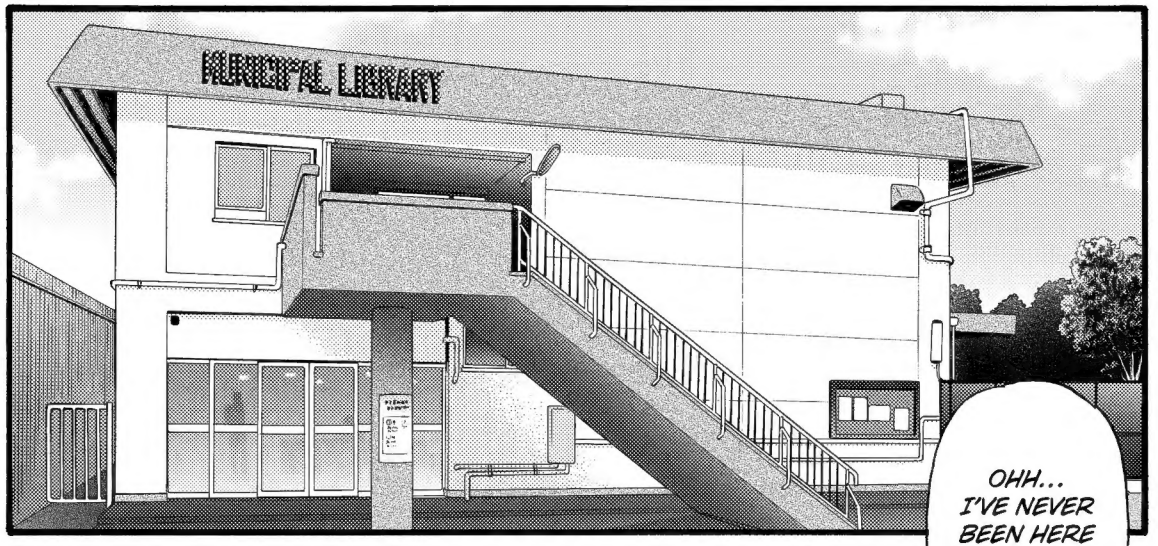

OH, MY. IS THAT RIGHT?
DO YOU KNOW IF HE'S HOME?
U-UM... ACTUALLY, I DIDN'T SEE MIYAKE-KUN YESTERDAY OR TODAY.


OH... THAT'S POSSIBLE.
Heh heh heh...
SUMMER VACATION IS ALMOST OVER. MAYBE HE'S FINISHING HIS HOMEWORK?


HE'S USUALLY HOME, BUT...

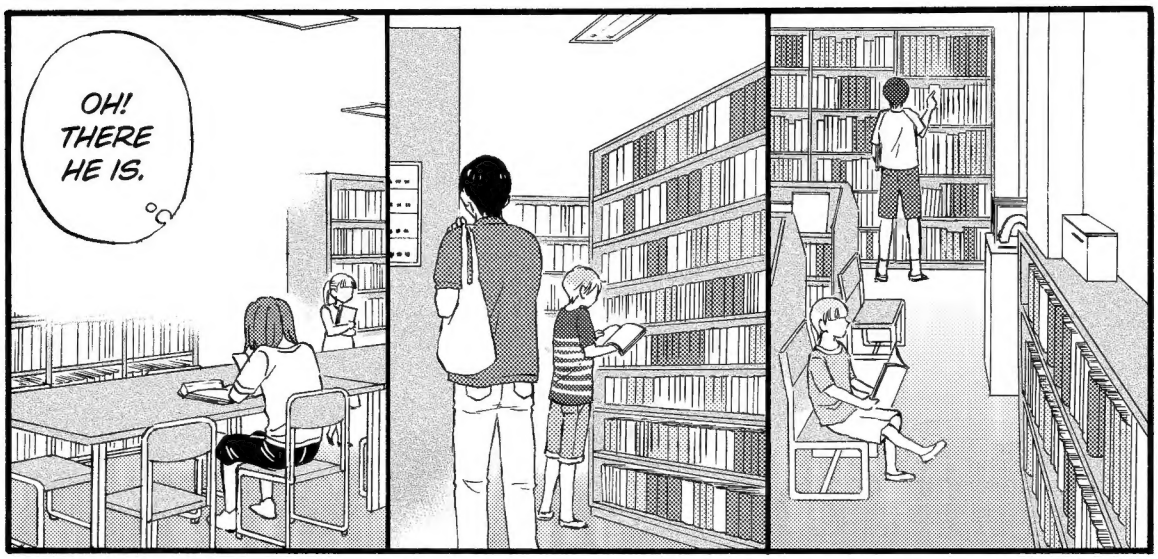

DID HE THINK HE WAS BOTHERING US BY DOING HIS HOMEWORK AT OUR HOUSE?
Uhh...
LIBRARY, LIBRARY...

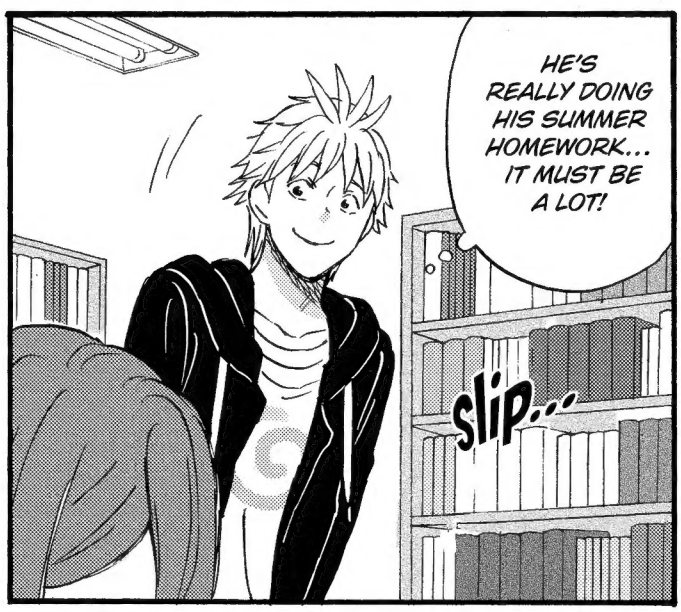

THANK YOU VERY MUCH. I'LL GO CHECK THAT.
BEFORE HE STARTED COMING TO YOUR HOUSE, I'D OFTEN SEE HIM THERE.
IF HE'S NOT HOME, THEN HE'S PROBABLY AT THE LIBRARY.

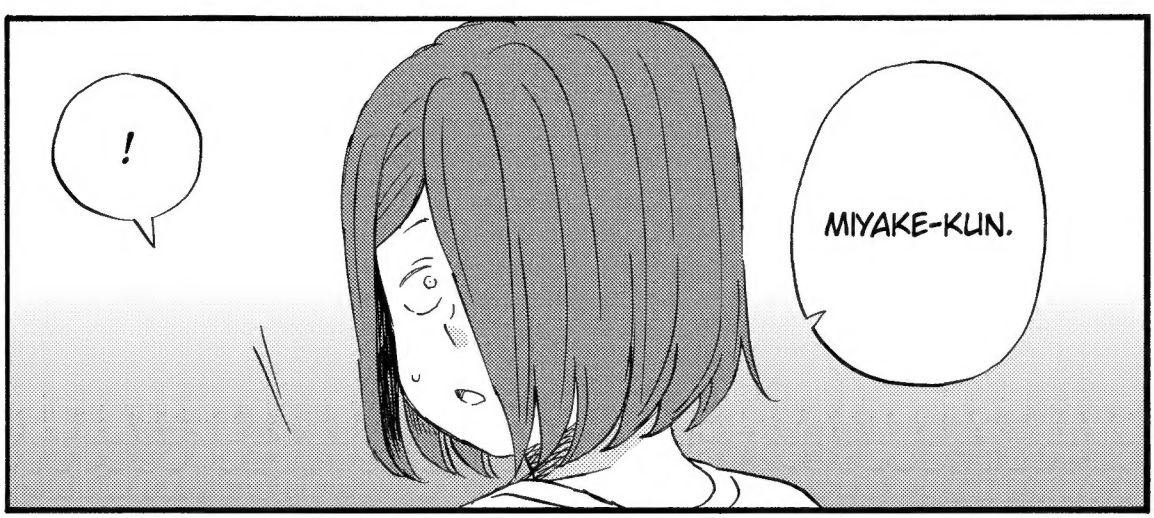

MUNICIPAL LIBRARY

BUT WHAT ABOUT MIYAKE-KUN...?

OHH... I'VE NEVER BEEN HERE BEFORE.
THERE ARE A LOT OF PEOPLE.


OH! THERE HE IS.

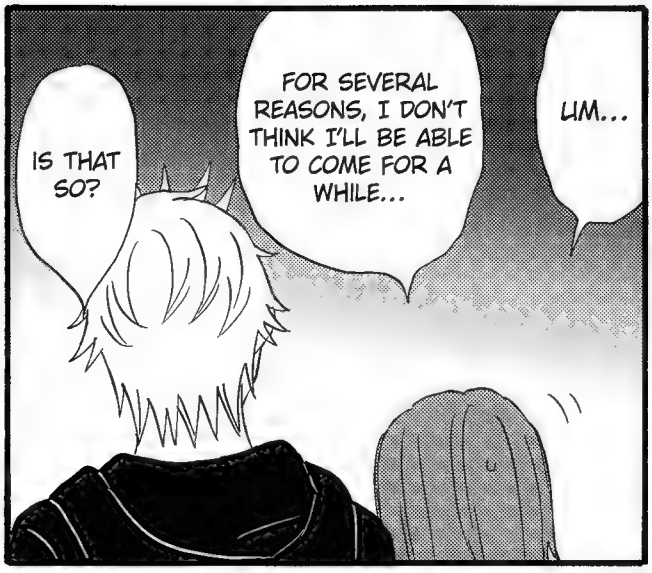

HE'S REALLY DOING HIS SUMMER HOMEWORK... IT MUST BE A LOT!
slip...


!
MIYAKE-KUN.

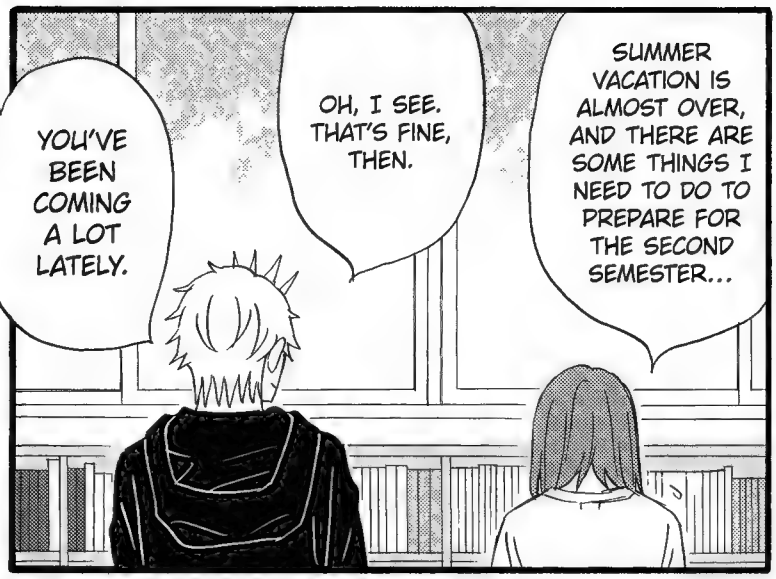
BOTH ISHIMURA-SAN AND I WERE WORRIED.
WELL... YOU DIDN'T SHOW UP FOR THE LAST TWO DAYS...
I-I'M SORRY...
Let me sit next to you.

HEY!
...HUH?!
KIRISHIMA-SAN?!
W-WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE...?
Step
FWip

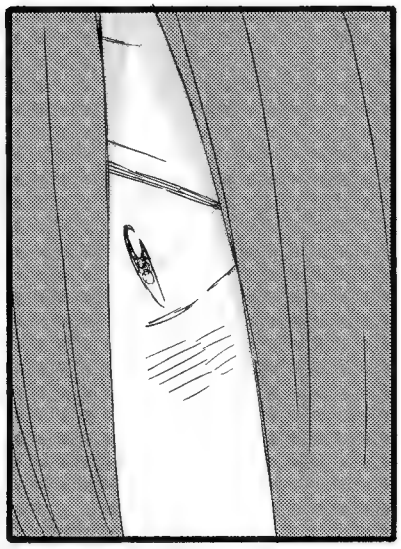
IT'S TOTALLY FINE IF YOU ALREADY HAVE PLANS AND CAN'T COME TO HELP...
THAT WAY, I CAN ALSO ADJUST MY SCHEDULE.
BUT LET ME KNOW IN ADVANCE, OKAY?
...RIGHT. I'M SORRY.

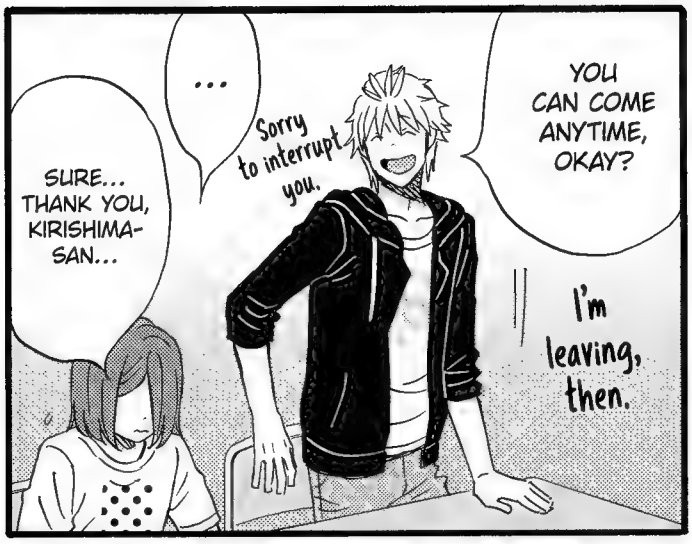

UM...
FOR SEVERAL REASONS, I DON'T THINK I'LL BE ABLE TO COME FOR A WHILE...
IS THAT SO?

SO WHEN YOU'RE NOT AROUND, IT FEELS A BIT LONELY.


YOU'VE BEEN COMING A LOT LATELY.
OH, I SEE. THAT'S FINE, THEN.
SUMMER VACATION IS ALMOST OVER, AND THERE ARE SOME THINGS I NEED TO DO TO PREPARE FOR THE SECOND SEMESTER...

I SEE...

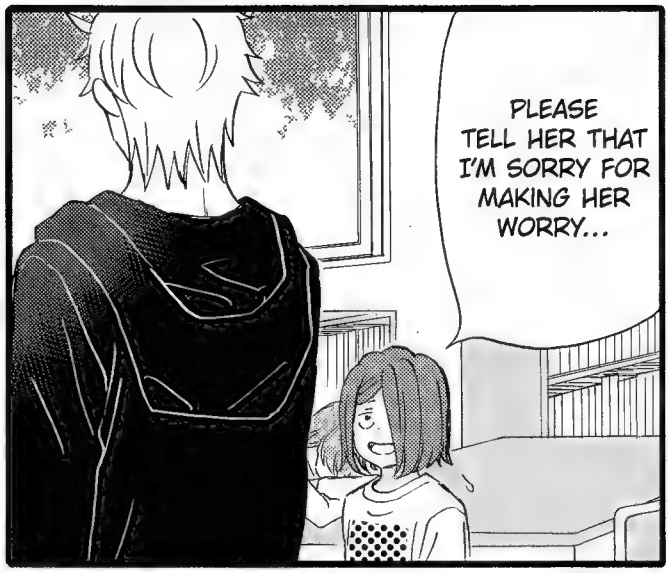


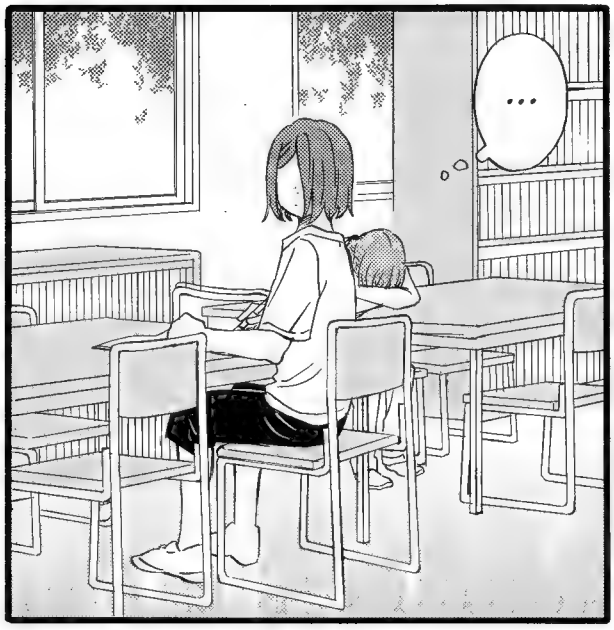

SURE... THANK YOU, KIRISHIMA-SAN...
...
Sorry to interrupt you.
YOU CAN COME ANYTIME, OKAY?
I'm leaving, then.

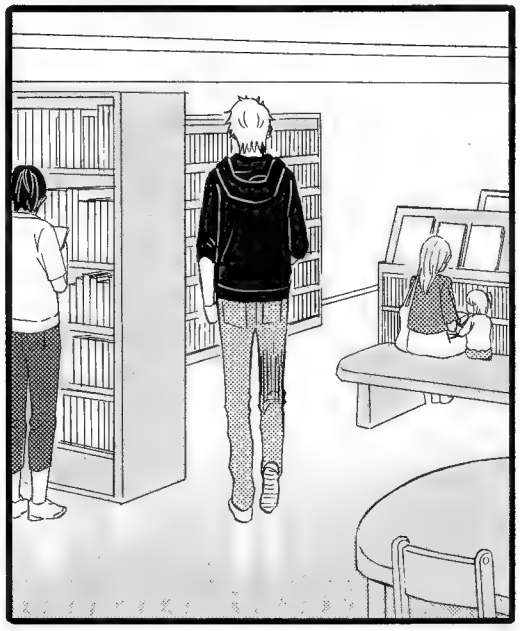
Clench...

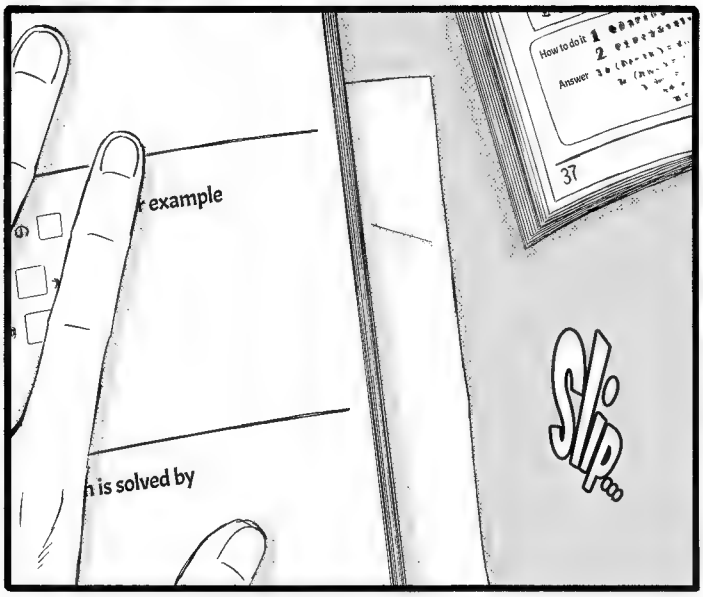
ISHIMURA-SAN, AS WELL.

SEE YA, THEN. GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR HOMEWORK.
GOTCHA!


PLEASE TELL HER THAT I'M SORRY FOR MAKING HER WORRY...


...

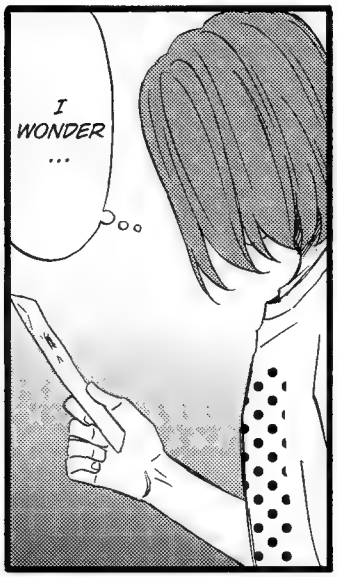


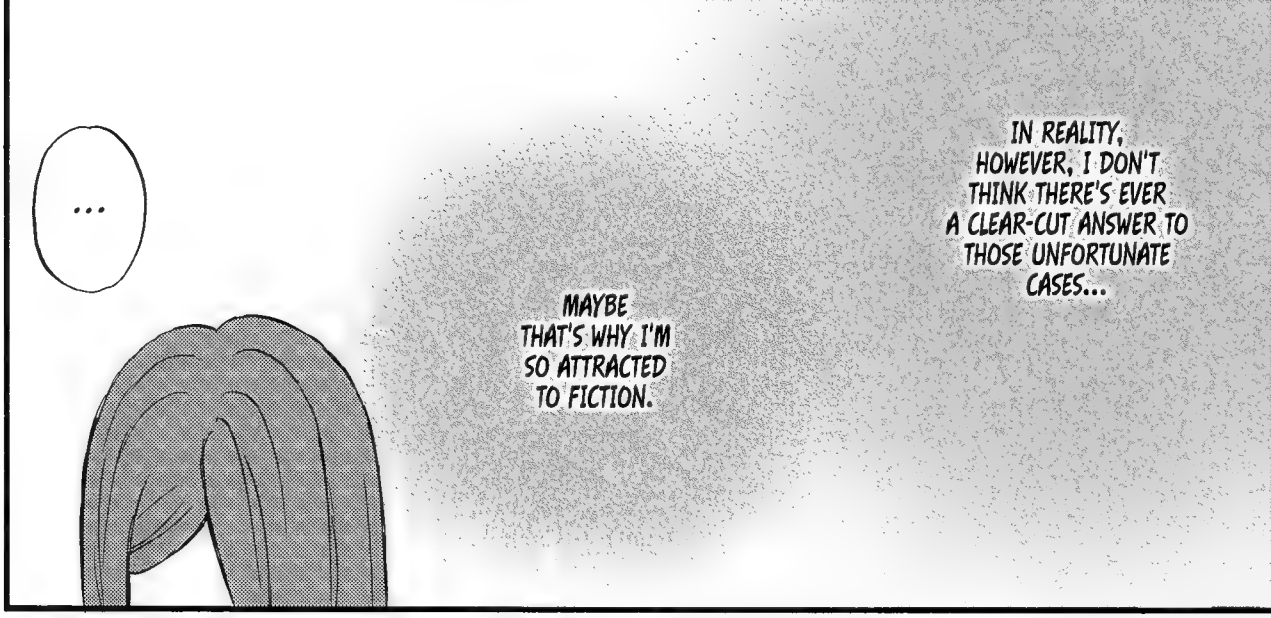


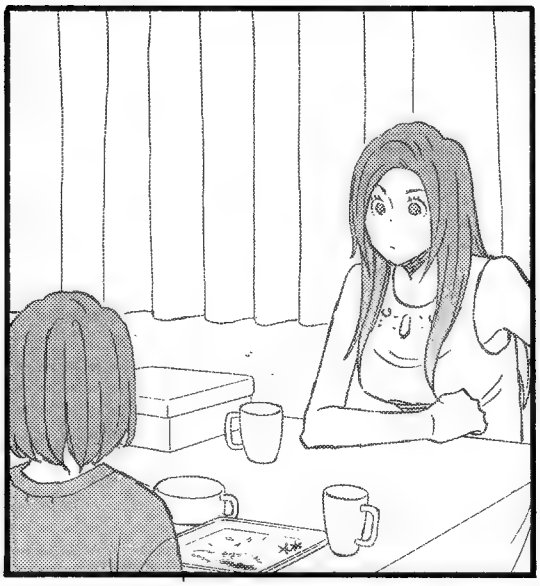
"UNFAIR SITUATIONS... AND UNFORTUNATE EVENTS THAT MAKE YOU WONDER WHY THEY HAPPENED. I LIKE HOW THERE'S ALWAYS A CLEAR ANSWER FOR THEM."

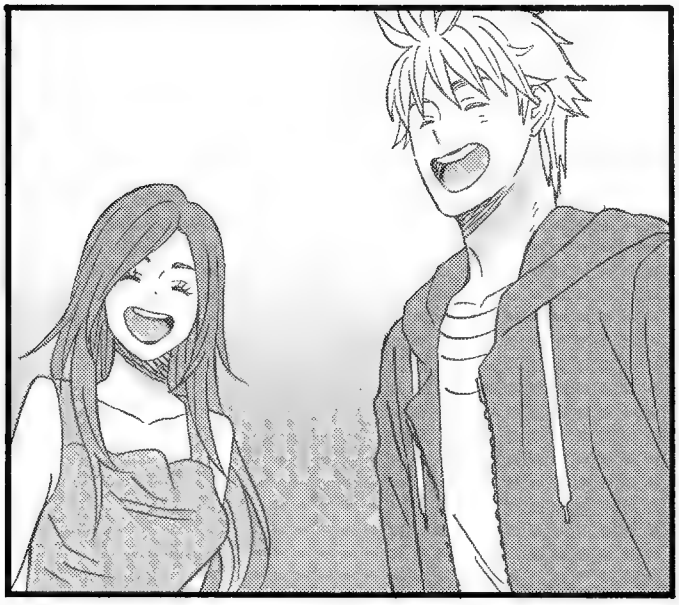
"DO YOU LIKE READING MYSTERY NOVELS, MIYAKE?"

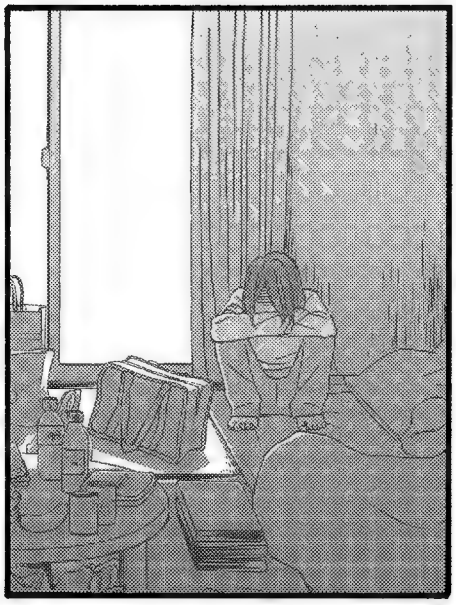
"IT FEELS GREAT TO READ THOSE KINDS OF BOOKS."

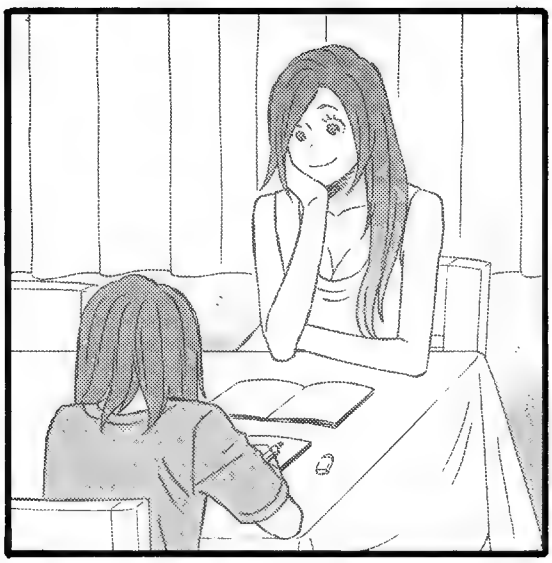


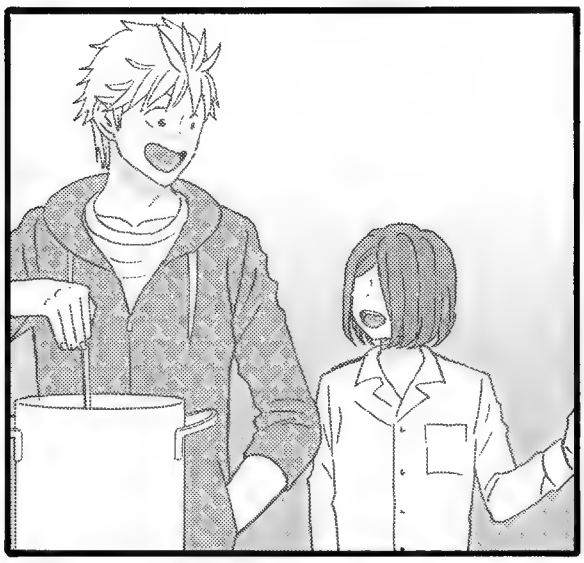

...
MAYBE THAT'S WHY I'M SO ATTRACTED TO FICTION.
IN REALITY, HOWEVER, I DON'T THINK THERE'S EVER A CLEAR-CUT ANSWER TO THOSE UNFORTUNATE CASES...

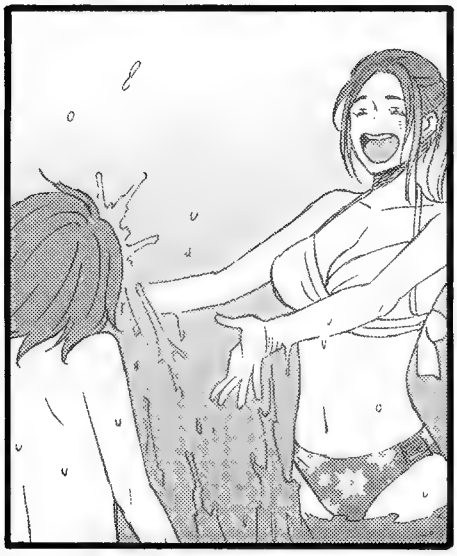


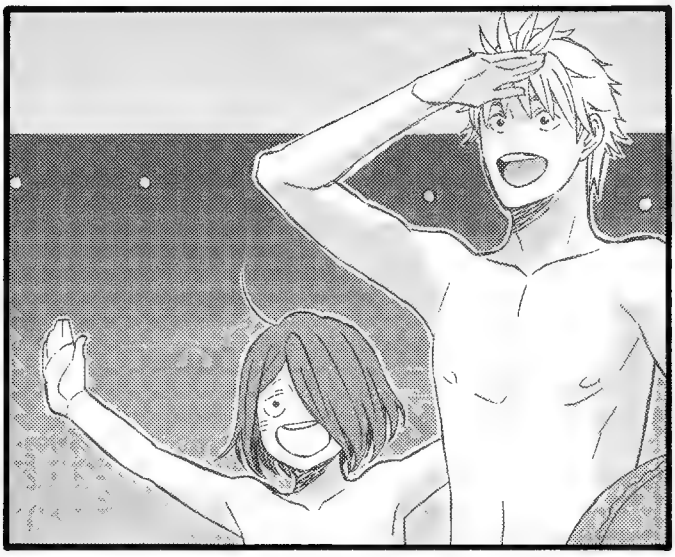


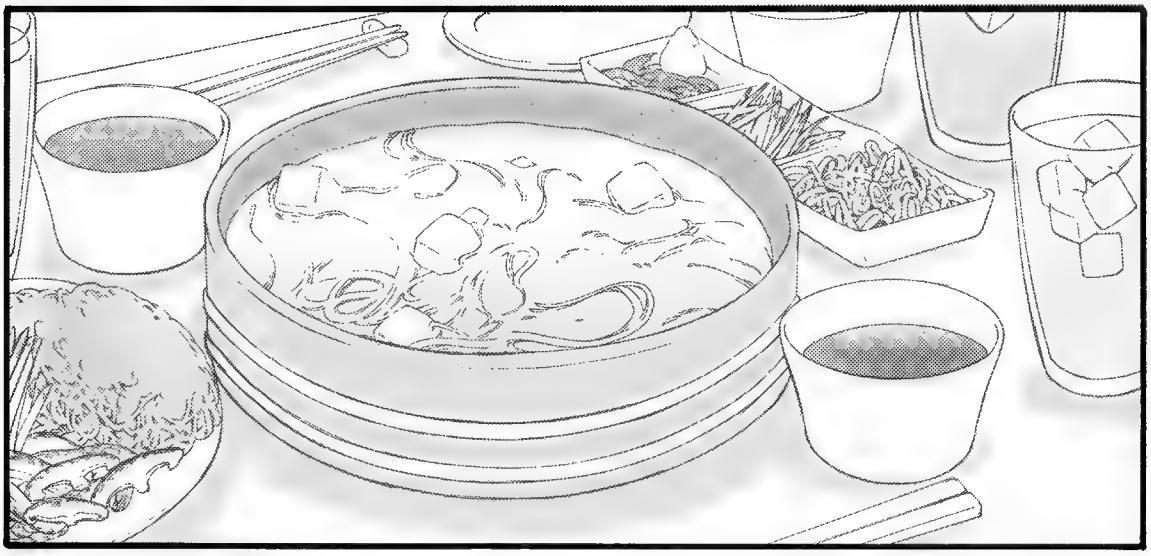


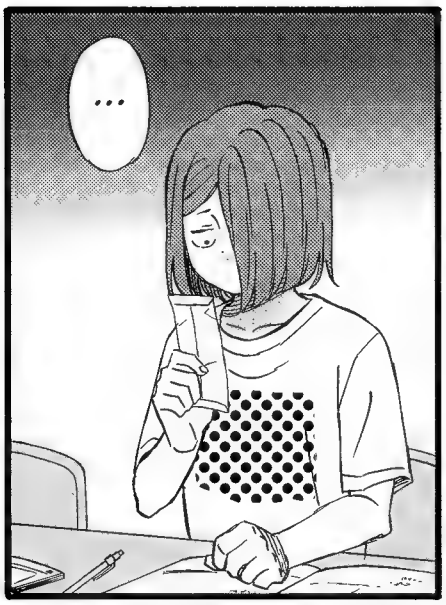




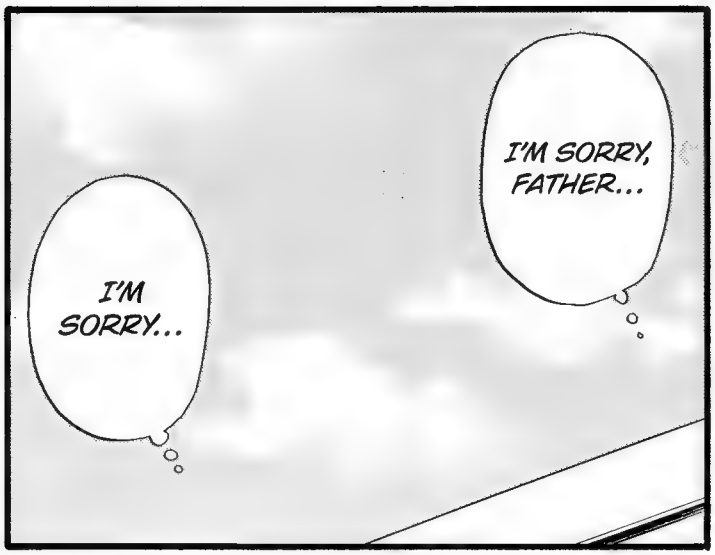






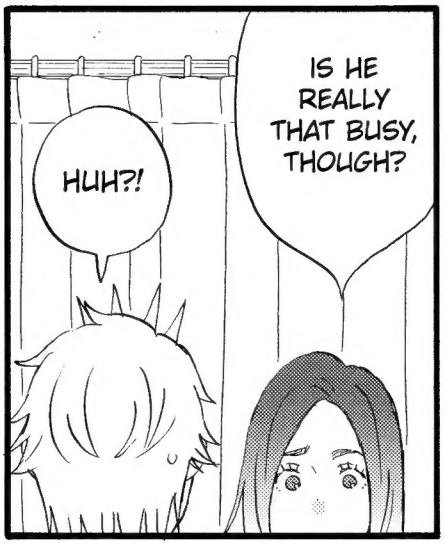

...

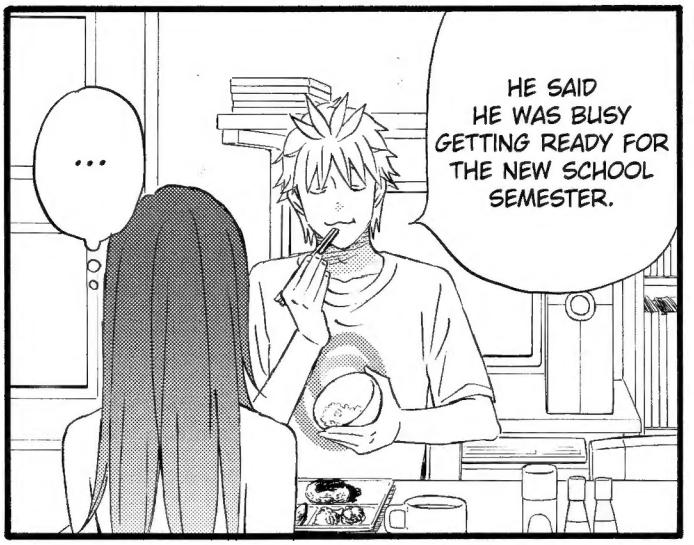
"AS ALWAYS, I'M SORRY ABOUT THIS..."

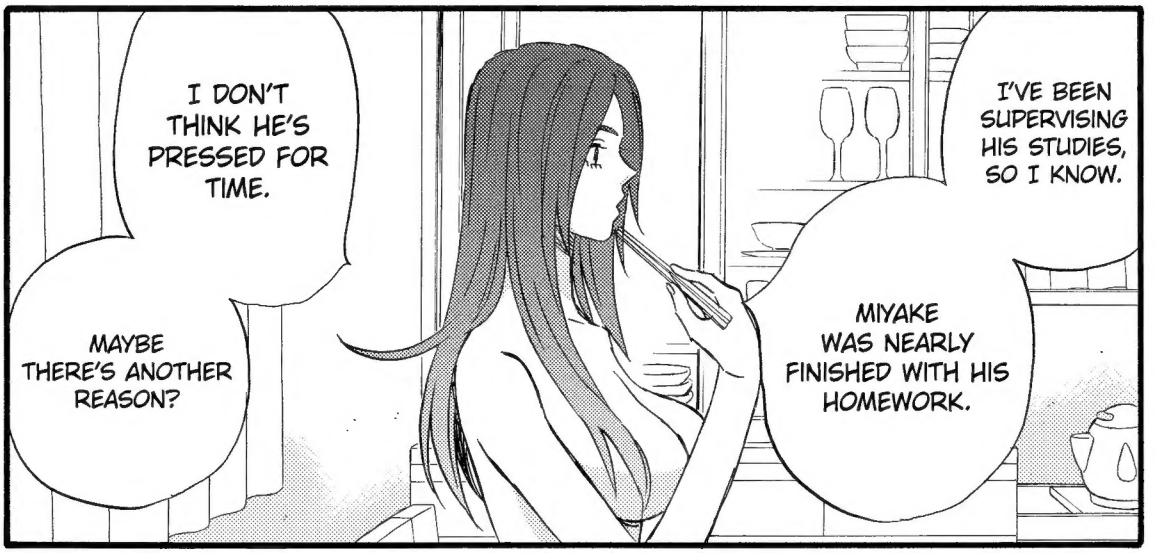

I'M SORRY, FATHER...
I'M SORRY...

I WONDER WHAT WENT WRONG...
FATHER ...

I SEE. SO MIYAKE WON'T BE COMING FOR A WHILE.


IS HE REALLY THAT BUSY, THOUGH?
HUH?!

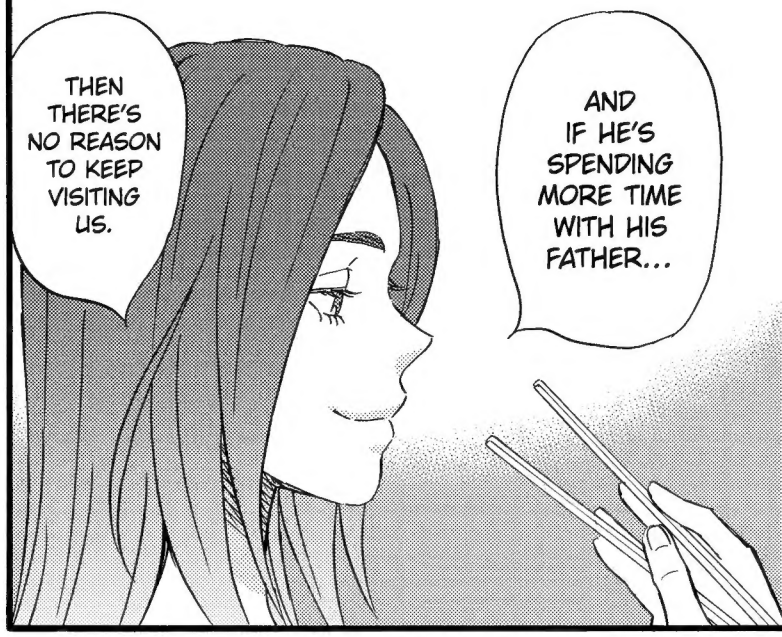

HE SAID HE WAS BUSY GETTING READY FOR THE NEW SCHOOL SEMESTER.
...


I'VE BEEN SUPERVISING HIS STUDIES, SO I KNOW.
MIYAKE WAS NEARLY FINISHED WITH HIS HOMEWORK.
I DON'T THINK HE'S PRESSED FOR TIME.
MAYBE THERE'S ANOTHER REASON?

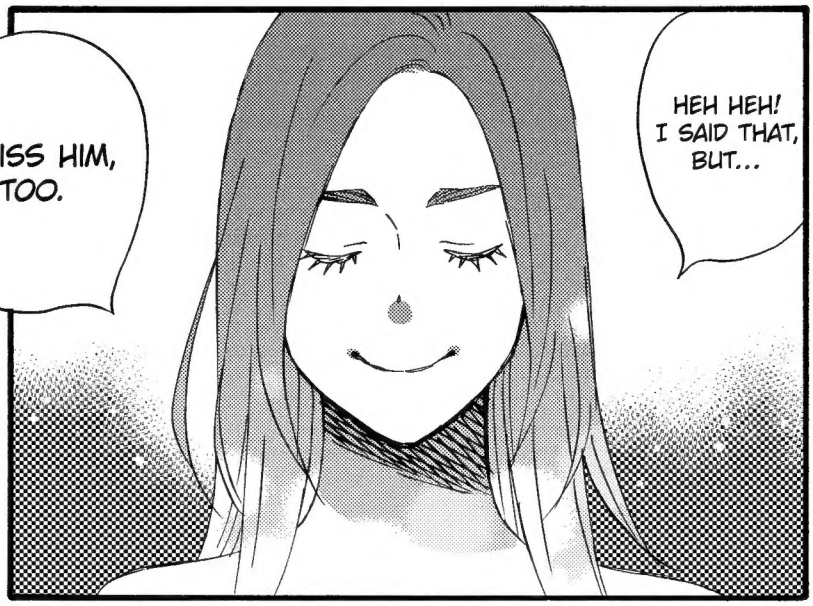
IT'S POSSIBLE THAT HIS FATHER'S WORKLOAD HAS LESSENED.

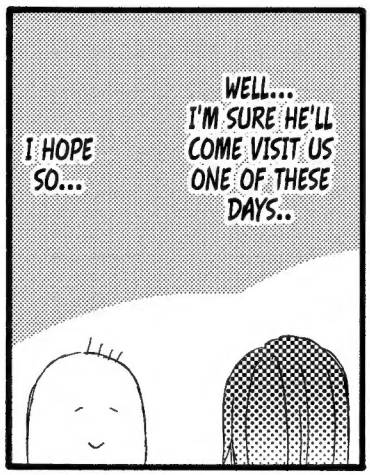
ANOTHER REASON...

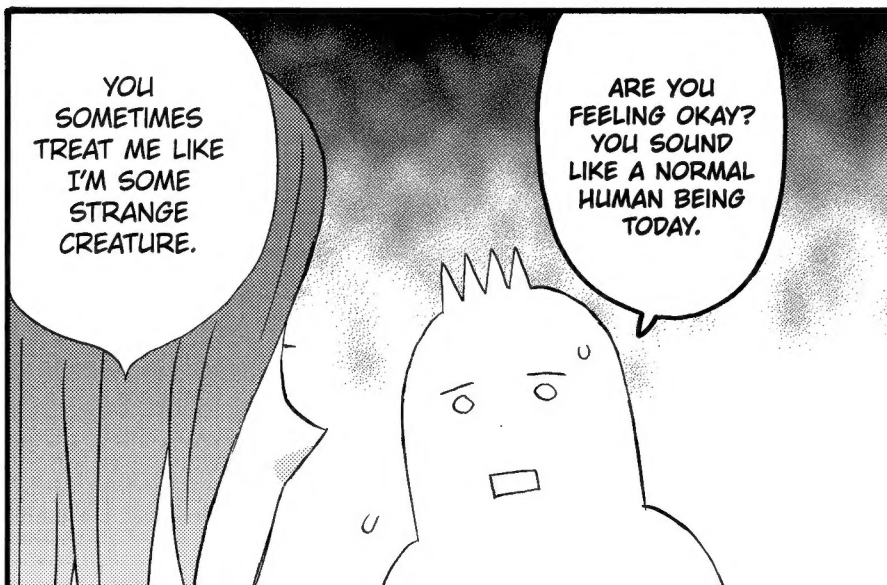
DON'T MAKE SUCH A LONELY FACE. IT'S A GOOD THING.
...
I KNOW THAT...


THEN THERE'S NO REASON TO KEEP VISITING US.
AND IF HE'S SPENDING MORE TIME WITH HIS FATHER...

ISHIMURA-SAN...
I MISS HIM, TOO.

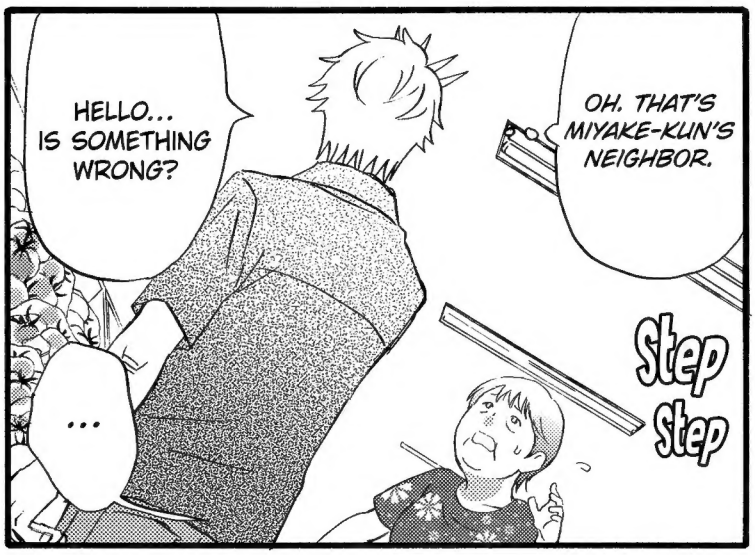

HEH HEH! I SAID THAT, BUT...


WELL... I'M SURE HE'LL COME VISIT US ONE OF THESE DAYS..
I HOPE SO...

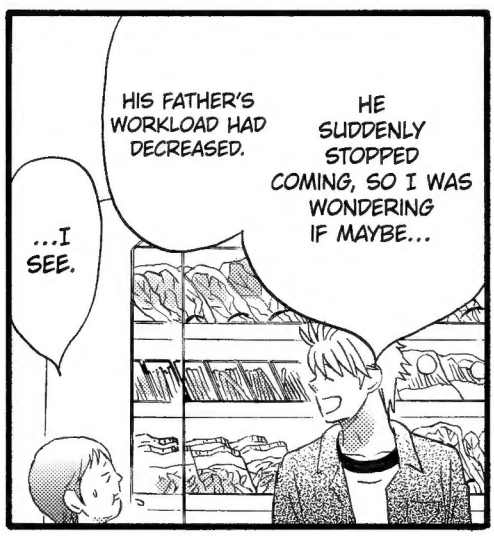

YOU SOMETIMES TREAT ME LIKE I'M SOME STRANGE CREATURE.
ARE YOU FEELING OKAY? YOU SOUND LIKE A NORMAL HUMAN BEING TODAY.

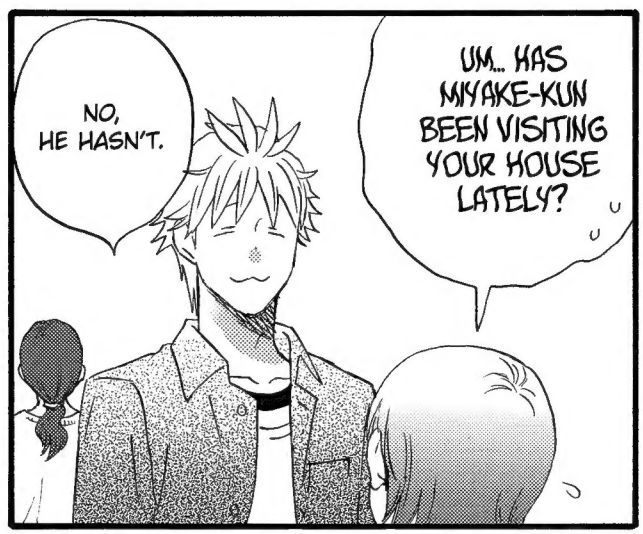
FOR THE TIME BEING, I GUESS I'LL GO BACK TO SHOPPING FOR TWO...
HMM... THIS IS A BIT TOO MUCH...

SUPER MA
SUPERMARKET


HELLO... IS SOMETHING WRONG?
...
OH. THAT'S MIYAKE-KUN'S NEIGHBOR.
Step
Step

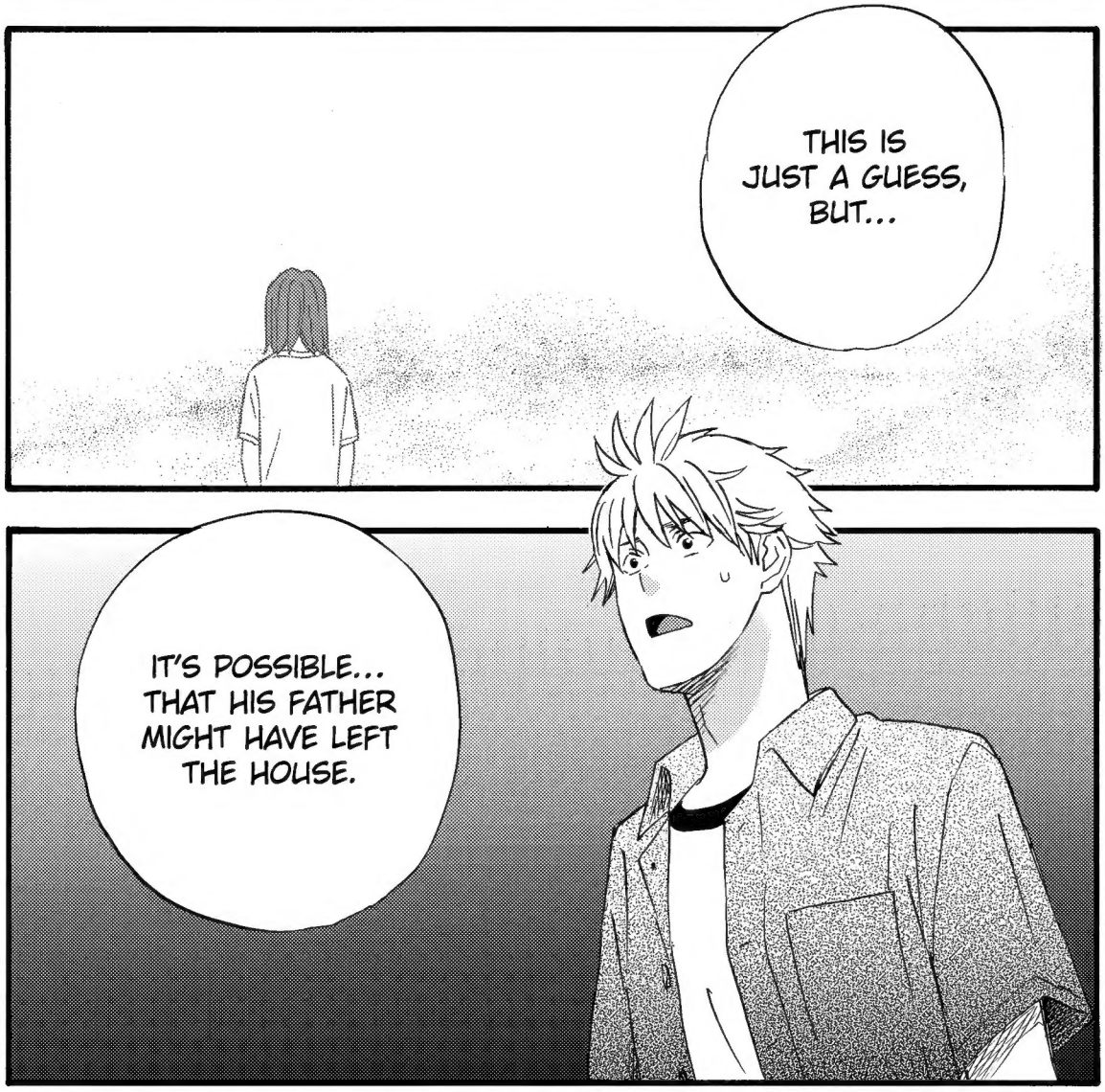
HEY! EXCUSE ME!
HM?


HIS FATHER'S WORKLOAD HAD DECREASED.
HE SUDDENLY STOPPED COMING, SO I WAS WONDERING IF MAYBE...
...I SEE.


NO, HE HASN'T.
UM... HAS MIYAKE-KUN BEEN VISITING YOUR HOUSE LATELY?

YESTERDAY, MIYAKE-KUN CAME TO ME AND ASKED ME IF THERE WERE ANY PART-TIME JOBS THAT EVEN JUNIOR HIGH STUDENTS COULD DO...
WHAT?! WHY WOULD HE ASK ABOUT THAT...?
HE ALSO INQUIRED ABOUT HIS APPARTMENT'S RENT...

...
IS SOMETHING WRONG?
...WELL...


THIS IS JUST A GUESS, BUT...
IT'S POSSIBLE... THAT HIS FATHER MIGHT HAVE LEFT THE HOUSE.